



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

YOUR COUNTRY NEEDS YOU¹

BY LEOLA STEELE, R.N.

Greenville, Miss.

"Your country needs you." Just about three years ago, how we all thrilled with pride when this clarion call swept over the land. Every man, woman, and child who called the United States of America "my country," was eager to serve, and most of them did serve, in some capacity, during the months which followed. It was no trouble to raise fabulous sums of money, every one met privation with a smile, enthusiasm for "preparedness" ran high, and we gave gladly, even of our heart's blood. Why? Because of united effort, chiefly.

And now cannot the nursing profession at least continue to express its devotion to country in a united effort? Your country needs you now as it never needed you on the battle fields, or in camp hospitals. The fight against disease and ignorance is on, and soldiers in the ranks are thinning. Our officers are making a noble effort, but they cannot win without the loyal and efficient support of the great army of nurses, which is made up of pupils in training, private duty, hourly, and public health nurses. In all these divisions recruits who can pass muster are needed, and we must maintain our high standards of womanhood in the rank and file,—not only standards of reasonable scholastic attainment, virtuous character, technical training, and an active mind, but the standard of willing, unselfish service for those in pain.

Did any nurse falter for fear of personal discomfort when shot and shell were creating patients for her in France? Did those who were left behind to perform the less spectacular service of preventive work, or care of the people's common ills hesitate because of danger of infection when influenza ravished the land in the autumn of 1918? Never! But now our nurses disgrace their name and profession by registering against night calls, or country cases. A night's sleep is more to them than service to humanity. Humanity is your country. The calamity of missing the "movies," or a call, or a lark with "the bunch" is causing many a nurse to miss the golden opportunity of serving someone in real need in a country home. Older nurses remember the privilege once theirs, when they fought the demon of typhoid, in a lonely farm house, through long nights. Though the patient often died, the family and friends gained knowledge which, in two decades, has well nigh routed the enemy.

¹ Read at the annual convention of the Mississippi State Nurses' Association, Jackson, Miss., October 29, 30, 1920.

Then there are those who refuse "contagious cases." Your country needs you! How are we to control contagious diseases if those trained in the science of prevention desert the army in its hour of peril? And in the wake of contagious and infectious disease, we find a large percentage of the victims who survive, but who are physically handicapped. Here, once more, the competent conscientious nurse can serve the country by helping these handicapped citizens to maintain at least a minimum of efficiency through public health activities.

There are pitifully few who are willing to fit themselves for this newer, more indefinite work of the profession. A pessimist might easily conclude that nurses have entirely lost the ideals for which the profession stands.

How are we to lessen the 35 per cent of preventable physical defects shown by the Army medical examinations, if there are disloyalty and indifference in our nursing contingent? We are to-day enjoying the benefits gained for us by such pioneers as Florence Nightingale, Isabel Hampton Robb, Isabel McIsaac, Sophia F. Palmer, Jane A. Delano and others of blessed memory. Do not hand down to posterity a less worthy heritage. Arouse yourselves and do your bit to uphold the glorious name gained for you by others, through travail and heart-ache.

Here in the south it was but yesterday that the trained nurse ranked extremely low, professionally and socially. We have a rare opportunity to place our profession above reproach if, by our daily life, our dress, and our cheerful service, wherever service is needed, we will only acquit ourselves as true women. The times are new and strange, we face new responsibilities, the handicap of sex is removed, but let us have a care lest reconstruction days become necessary as was the case half a century ago when the handicap of race or color was removed from the inhabitants of this country.

Wherever we may serve, let us serve to the capacity of our physical and mental ability. Let nothing but years of night duty, nothing but personal physical weakness or predisposition cause us to register against night work, country calls, or contagious cases. Let us prove the dignity and usefulness of our work by our daily lives, and then do what we can to induce those women whom we respect to enter the profession, that the improvement of our country's citizenship may go on from year to year, even after our race is run.

The powers of darkness, ignorance, and sin are more powerful than any army of Huns. These enemies threaten this fair land. Your country needs you, every one. Dare not ignore her call, and live to see her conquered.